NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION CENTER

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basic imagery interpretation report

Mar Chiquita Rocket Test Range (S)

MISSILE RANGES: STRATEGIC SSM SPACE FACILITIES

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ARGENTINA

[redacted]

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RCA-15/0008/79
MARCH 1980
Copy 49

INSTALLATION OR ACTIVITY NAME	COUNTRY
Mar Chiquita Rocket Test Range	AR

UTM COORDINATES	GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES
NA	37-43-41S 057-25-05W

MAP REFERENCE

DMA. JOG, Series 1501, Sheet SJ 21-6, 1st ed, Jul 75, scale 1:250,000

LATEST IMAGERY USED	NEGATION DATE (If required)
	NA

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ABSTRACT

1. (TSR) Mar Chiquita Rocket Test Range, from which both foreign- and domestic-built solid propellant rockets have been launched, is the newest and largest test range in Argentina. The range consists of a launch area, a tracking facility, a missile assembly/checkout area, a propellant/explosives storage area, and administration/support facilities.

2. (TSR) This is the first NPIC basic report on Mar Chiquita Rocket Test Range. The report includes a location map, five annotated photographs, and five tables.

INTRODUCTION

3. [redacted] Mar Chiquita Rocket Test Range (Figure 1), approximately 22 nautical miles (nm) north-northeast of the city of Mar del Plata, is the major rocket test range in Argentina. The rocket range is operated by the Argentine Air Force and is officially known as the Guided Missile Experimental Launch Center—Atlantic (Centro de Experimentaciones y Lanzimientos de Proyectiles Autopropulsados—Atlantico), or CELPA (Atlantico).[1]

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4. [redacted] Mar Chiquita was established in 1967. The facility has a larger downrange area for launching larger missiles than Argentina's first launch facility, Chamical Rocket Test Range[1] [redacted] which is in La Rioja Province in northwest Argentina. Both foreign- and domestic-built rockets have been launched from Mar Chiquita, including the French-built Dragon and the Argentine Loki-Dart, built in cooperation with the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration.[2] To date, all activity related to research on rockets has been toward peaceful application, utilizing solid propellant rockets for gathering meteorological data.[2] In 1969 the Argentine Government offered to place the launch site under the sponsorship of the United Nations, and a United Nations committee that visited the site submitted a report in favor of the proposal.[3]

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BASIC DESCRIPTION

5. (TSR) Mar Chiquita Rocket Test Range (Figure 2), situated along the Atlantic Ocean, consists of a launch area, a tracking facility, a missile assembly/checkout area, a propellant/explosives storage area, and administration/support facilities (Figures 3 through 6). Horizontal dimen-

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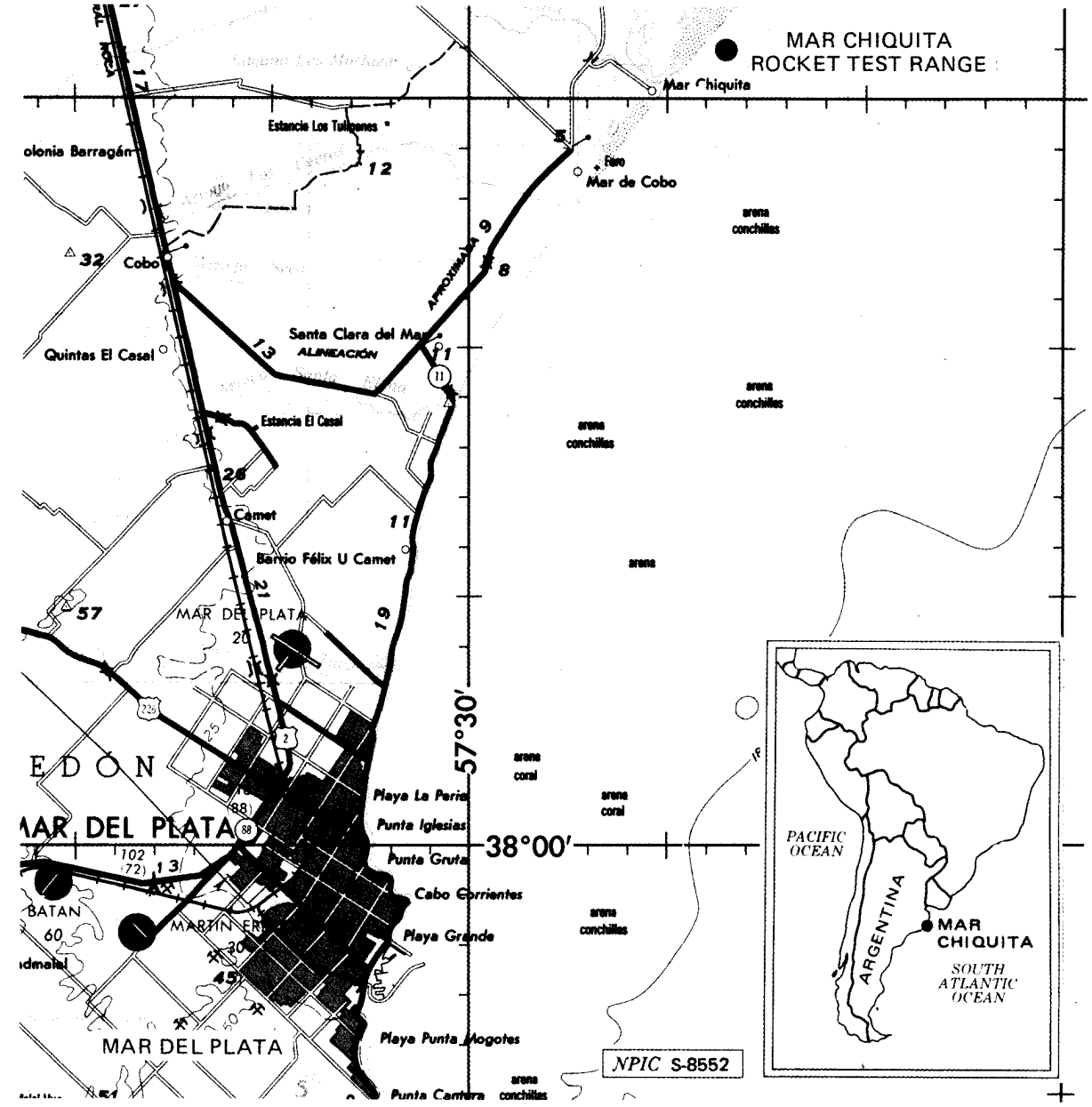

FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF MAR CHIQUITA ROCKET TEST RANGE, ARGENTINA

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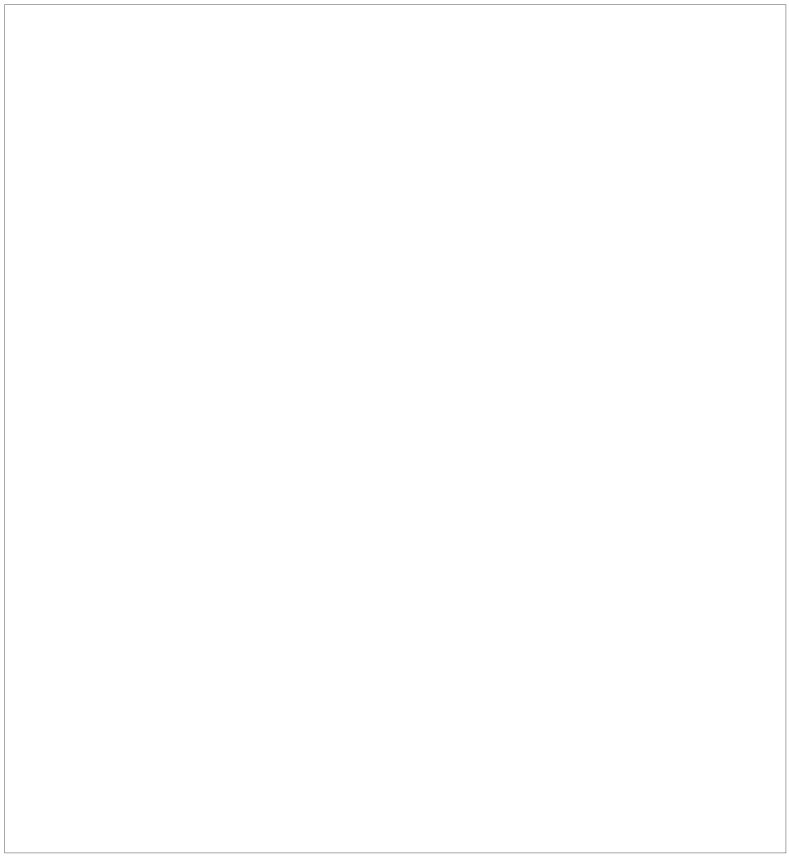

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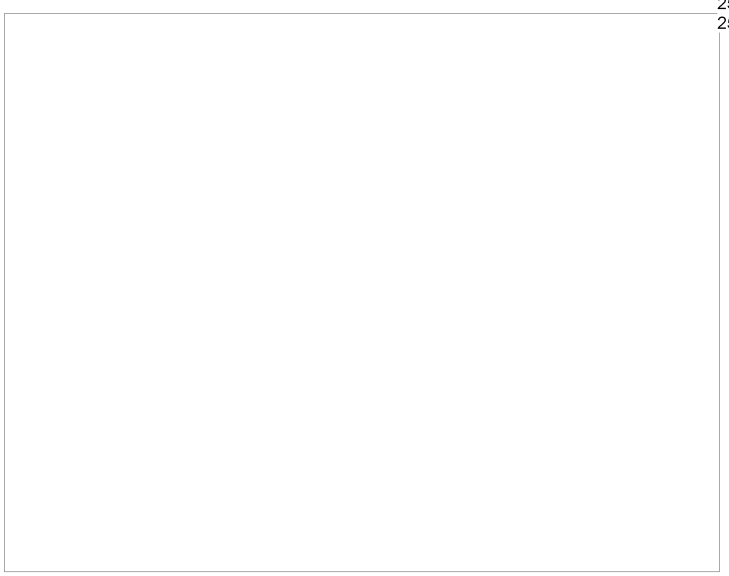

6. (TSR) The launch area (inset table), in the eastern section of the facility, consists of a rectangular concrete launch pad with a control bunker, three support buildings, a weather/instrumentation tower, two launch rails, and two light towers.

7. (TSR) The tracking facility (Figure 4 and Table 1), approximately 800 meters west-southwest of the launch pad, consists of four domed optical tracking antennas (one of which is mobile), a possible dish antenna, 12 tracking support vans, and a support building. A vehicle storage building is adjacent to the tracking facility.

8. (TSR) The missile assembly/checkout area (inset table), approximately 900 meters west-southwest of the launch pad, consists of a missile assembly/checkout building and a support building.

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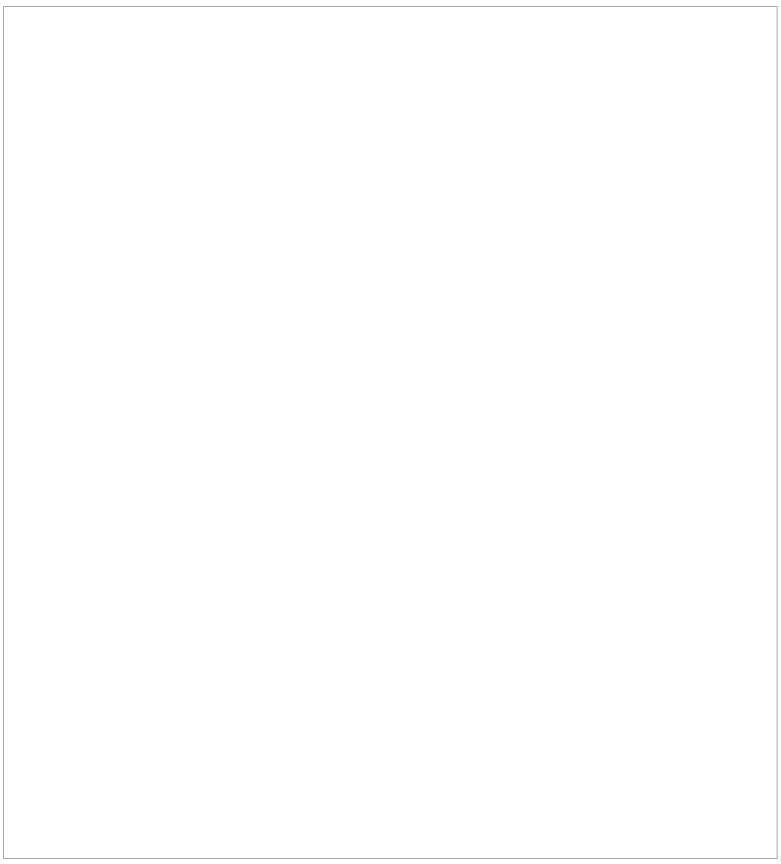

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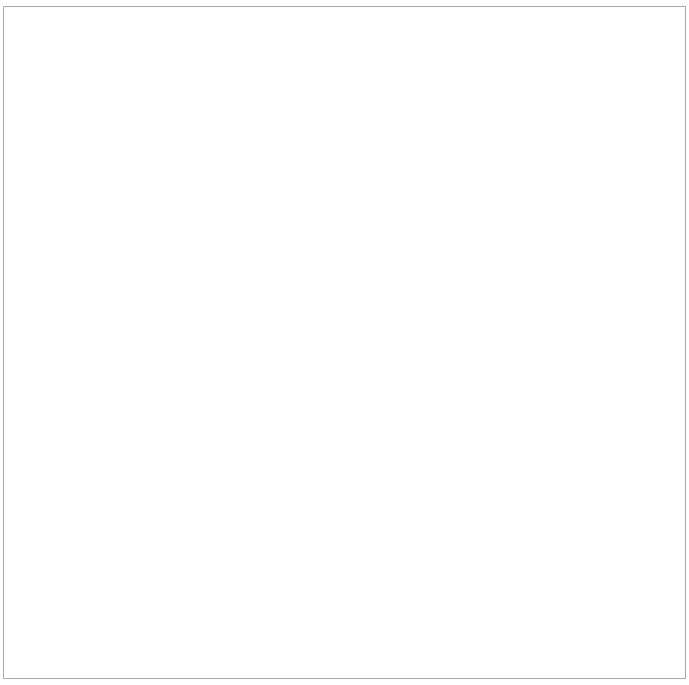

9. (TSR) The propellant/explosives storage area (inset table), approximately 800 meters north-northwest of the launch pad, consists of a bunkered, drive-through, solid-propellant storage building and a bunkered explosives storage building.

10. (TSR) The administration area (Figure 6 and Table 2), approximately 1,700 meters west-northwest of the launch pad, contains a T-shaped administration and security building (item 16) at the entrance to the facility and a stick mast antenna adjacent to the T-shaped building.

11. (TSR) The administration/support facilities also include five support areas. The first support area consists of three side-by-side support buildings and a tower. Ground scarring was observed around the three support buildings. The second support area consists of seven storage buildings and a POL tank. The third support area consists of a firehouse/vehicle storage building, a communications building with two stick mast antennas and a Yagi antenna, and two support buildings. The fourth support area consists of two quarters, two masonry towers, a latticework tower, and a water cistern. The fifth support area consists of a masonry tower with an earth-bunkered base. Around the masonry tower are four small structures (only two shown on graphic) with a trench connecting each of the structures to the tower.

REFERENCES

[redacted] 25X1

MAPS OR CHARTS

DMA. Joint Operations Graphic, Series 1501, Sheet SJ 21-6, 1st ed, Jul 75, scale 1:250,000 (Distribution Limited)

DOCUMENTS

1. CIA. [redacted] Scientific and Technical Intelligence Report, *Foreign Free-World Missile and Rocket Ranges*, Jan 71 (SECRET S[redacted]) 25X1 25X1
2. DoD [redacted] *Missile Capability in Argentina*, 27 Apr 73 (CONFIDENTIAL) 25X1
3. Dept of State. Airgram A-697, *Brief Resume of Space Sciences in Argentina, and the GOA Offer to Place Its New Launch Facilities Under UN Auspices*, 23 Dec 69 (UNCLASSIFIED)

REQUIREMENT

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Project 290001DP

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